

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CU-02 IO-13 OMB-01 CIAE-00

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5169

INFO CINCPAC

DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 6474

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: MPOL, PINT, CH

SUBJ: REVOLUTIONIZING AND MODERNIZING THE PLA

REF: (A) PEKING 1120, (B) PEKING 1117, (C) HONG KONG 5571

SUMMARY: LONG PREDICTED BY NNDA CADRE HERE, PRC LEADERS
HAVE FINALLY BEGUN TO CALL FOR THE RECTIFICATION AND THE
"REVOLUTIONIZING" OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY.

LINKED WITH THE "ACCELERATION" OF WAR PREPARATIONS,
THE NEED TO RESTORE THE MILITARY'S FINE FIGHTING STYLE
AND TO CARRY THE CAMPAING AGAINST THE "GANG OF FOUR'S
PERNICIOUS INFLUENCE" THROUGH TO THE END HAS BEEN
EMPHASIZED BY A RECENT PLA GENERAL POLITICAL DEPARTMENT
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DIRECTIVE AND A JUNE 6 " LIBERATION ARMY DAILY"
EDITORIAL. APPARENTLY, HIGH-LEVEL MILITARY MEETINGS
HAVE ENCOUNTERED SOME DIFFICULTY IN DECIDING THE
PACE OF WEAPONS MODERNIZATION AND THE EXTENT OF
MILITARY RECTIFICATION. END SUMMARY.

1. IN THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS WE HAVE SEEN

CONSIDERABLE MEDIA ATTENTION TO MILITARY THEMES.
BEGINNING WITH CCP VICE CHAIRMAN YEH CHIEN-YING'S
MAY 9 TACHING SPEECH CALLING FOR AN EVEN-HANDED
APPROACH TO MILITARY MODERNIZATION:

-- SEVERAL MEDIA ARTICLES HAVE ALLUDED TO A DEBATE
OVER THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVANCED WEAPONS SYSTEMS
VERSUS A MORE MAOIST EMPHASIS ON THE HUMAN FACTOR
IN WAR;

-- NCNA ON MAY 31 RELEASED THE TEXT OF A "RECENT"
DIRECTIVE BY THE PLA'S GENERAL POLITICAL DEPARTMENT.
THE DIRECTIVE ORDERED PLA UNITS TO "PURIFY" THEIR
LEADING BODIES AND IMPLIED THAT THERE WOULD BE AN
ARMY-WIDE PURGE OF CADRES WHOSE LOYALTY TO THE
HUA REGIME IS SUSPECT;

-- SOME LOWER-LEVEL PLA UNITS HAVE APPARENTLY ALREADY
STARTED TO DISCUSS AND IMPLEMENT THESE RECTIFICATION
PLANS (REFTELS A AND B);

-- GENERAL POLITICAL DEPARTMENT DEPUTY DIRECTOR
LIANG PI-YEH AT A JUNE 4 PEKING MEETING APPEARED
TO IGNORE THE RECTIFICATION ISSUE AND STATED
THAT "TIME IS PRESSING" AND "OPPORTUNITIES CANNOT
BE WASTED" IN IMPLEMENTING HUA'S DIRECTIVES ON
MILITARY MODERNIZATION.

2. THIS INCREASED MEDIA ATTENTION SUGGESTS THAT
HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS, MOST LIKELY INVOLVING THE CCP'S
AUTHORITATIVE MILITARY COMMISSION, WERE IN SESSION
SOMETIME DURING THE PASS MONTH. THIS IMPRESSION IS
STRENGTHENED BY THE RELEASE OF A JUNE 6 "LIBERATION
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ARMY DAILY" EDITORIAL WHICH EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE
OF "ACCELERATING" AND "INTENSIFYING" MILITARY MODERNI-
ZATION. THE EDITORIAL PLACED THE QUESTION OF
MILITARY MODERNIZATION IN THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, ARGUING THAT THE PRC MUST
GUARD AGAINST THE INCREASINGLY FIERCE STRUGGLE BETWEEN
THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES THAT WILL
EVENTUALLY LEAD TO WAR. THIS INVOLVES AN "IMPORTANT
LIFE AND DEATH PROBLEM FOR OUR COUNTRY AND OUR PEOPLE."

3. THE EDITORIAL, HOWEVER, APPEARS TO BE MORE THAN AN
ARGUMENT THAT MILITARY MODERNIZATION MUST BE STRESSED.
FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE EDITORIAL AUTHORITATIVELY
STATES THAT "REVOLUTIONIZING" THE PLA "MUST COMMAND"
MILITARY MODERNIZATION. OPEN ABANDONMENT OF MAOIST
DOCTRINE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND STRUGGLE
AGAINST THE INFLUENCE OF THE "GANG OF FOUR" IN THE
ARMY MUST CONTINUE. CLEARLY, ARMY RECTIFICATIONS
IS TO BE CARRIED OUT AMID RE-EMPHASIS ON MILITARY

MODERNIZATION.

4. SUCH A FORMULA WILL PROBABLY BE VERY DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT. SINCE LAST JANUARY, THERE HAVE BEEN A SERIES OF ARTICLES SUGGESTING THAT MILITARY AND ECONOMIC PRIORITIES HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF INTENSE DEBATE. THE LATEST EDITORIAL EVEN OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE "SPEED (OF MILITARY MODERNIZATION) IS A VERY ACUTE POLITICAL QUESTION". WHILE THE MILITARY HAS APPARENTLY BEEN GIVEN THE GO AHEAD TO CONTINUE MODERNIZATION WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE FIFTH FIVE YEAR PLAN, THE PLA MUST SWALLOW THE BITTER PILL OF "PURIFYING" ITS RANKS OF "GANG OF FOUR" TYPE PROBLEMS.

SULLIVAN

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